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U.S. Save

Our Soldiers and Sailors

PREPARED FOR THE

Commission on the Church and Social Service

OF THE

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

Washington Office

1114 Woodward Building, Washington, D. C.

SAVE OUR SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

They enlist to save the country; the Churches should endeavor to save them.

DO YOU KNOW

1. That there are 150,000 men in the Army and Navy of the United States for whom only such religious privileges are available as the Federal Government provides. A recent letter from a Mississippi "Mother of two who went to the front" says: "I have a son on his second enlistment on the *Minnesota*, which has no chaplain." Her oldest son, who

served four years in the Navy, reports that they "do not have service a quarter of the time." She adds: "We are all Baptists, and think our boys in blue, away from home and home influence, ought to have the best our nation affords."

2. That Army and Navy chaplains have a difficult work to perform under difficult conditions and need the fraternal sympathy, co-operation, and prayers of their Churches;

3. That many of them think that their Churches have little or no interest in them or their work, and feel a sense of isolation that is depressing;

4. That many of the men in the Army and Navy come from good homes, from churches, from circles of good influence, and need to know that in the service of their country, separated from home privileges and blessings, their existence and interests are not forgotten.

5. That some of our national legislators have opposed increase of chaplains on the ground that soldiers and marines quartered in or near settled places can attend the churches. But in not a few cases the boys in blue are not only not welcomed in the churches but are given to understand that they are not wanted. If this is hard to believe it is nevertheless a hard, indubitable fact.

THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DONE.

The Government of the United States, responding to frequent representations by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and other bodies, is gradually enlarging the facilities for religious work at camp and on battleships and at stations.

The number of Naval chaplains, which has been shockingly inadequate for half a century, is to be doubled, and from seven to ten acting chaplains, from whom the permanent list will be increased, will be appointed yearly until there are fifty-two chaplains or more in the service. The Navy Department has under consideration a list of new regulations which the Federal Council has recommended,

the effect of which, if accepted, will be greatly to increase the facilities of the chaplains for moral and religious work among the sailors and marines. Heretofore the Government has sent the chaplain empty-handed to his duties, providing neither Bibles nor musical instruments, ecclesiastical vestments nor vessels for the communion service. The various Churches have been quite as negligent.

The War Department has been moved to do much for the religious necessities of the soldiers. Congress has made an appropriation for recreation tents, moving picture machines, libraries, etc. Secretary Garrison has decided that hereafter there shall be included in the estimates of the War Department items for erection of chapels at all posts where chaplains are stationed until every such post is provided with a chapel; also items for the necessary equipment of such chapels, including organs, and for the care of recreation tents, motion picture machines, etc.

The Association for the Promotion of the Moral and Religious Welfare of Our Soldiers and Sailors was organized in Detroit, Michigan, in September, 1914, for the purpose of securing from the Government better equipment and facilities for the work of Army and Navy chaplains, closer and more helpful relations between them and the Churches to which they belong, and an active, helpful interest of churches, Sunday schools and young people's societies in the enlisted men in Army and Navy.

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council commended the Association to the assistance of the Church and Social Service Commission, and the Commission by its Secretarial Council has authorized Secretary Carroll to conduct the necessary correspondence on behalf of the Commission and to prepare literature and arrange for its distribution through the denominational agencies.

THINGS TO BE DONE.

1. Each denomination should have a Commission on Chaplains to keep it in close and sympathetic touch with its chaplains, and to recommend suitable

candidates for appointment to chaplaincies in the Army and Navy. Some of the Churches have such Commissions; some have not.

2. It will be of great service to the cause if the denominational subordinate body to which a U. S. chaplain belongs will ask for an annual letter from him to be read to the body and authorize a reply to be sent, designed to show its sympathy in the work of the chaplain and its regard for him personally.

3. Are any of our soldiers and sailors from your community, perhaps from your church and Sunday school? If so, write to them, see that they are mentioned in your own prayers and in the prayers of the Church. Get the young people's society interested in them. Temptations and demoralizing influences assail them under the peculiar conditions in which they live, and their love for home and Church and virtue and temperance ought to be kept alive and nourished.

4. Information concerning chaplains in the Army or Navy, with their denominational connections and their postoffice addresses, will be furnished on application to the Secretary, who will answer all inquiries as far as possible.

5. Good candidates for the chaplaincy service, especially in the Navy, are needed. Write for information as to requirements, method of application, etc., to the Secretary.

6. Suggestions as to how the interest of the churches in religious work among the men in the Army and Navy may be increased are invited.

In behalf of the Association for the Promotion of the Moral and Religious Welfare of Our Soldiers and Sailors.

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